Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings includes changes to Figures 1a) and 1b). Applicants have slightly restructured Figures 1a) and 1b) in order to avoid confusion. In restructured Figure 1a) and 1b) no changes have been made to the objects illustrated, but the features disclosed have been made clearer by restructuring the reference signs and by enlarging the views. Since no structural changes have been made to the Figures, an annotated sheet is not provided.

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 4-10 are under examination in the application, while claims 1-3 are withdrawn. The claims have been rejected. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the claims in view of the following arguments.

The drawings have been objected to by the Examiner. In particular, Figure 1 is regarded as confusing. Applicants have slightly restructured Figures 1a) and 1b) in order to avoid confusion. In restructured Figures 1a) and 1b) no changes have been made to the objects illustrated, but the features disclosed have been made clearer by restructuring the reference signs and by enlarging the views. It should be noted that the expression "rim 11" refers to the edge or corner formed between the wall 13 and the receiving surface 5. This interpretation is supported by a common definition of "rim": the outer often curved or circular edge or border of something (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition). The specification supports this use of the term, see [0016] where it is specifically stated that "it is the rim of the pit which provides the surface effect that holds a drop in position…"

Applicants submit that with respect to the hydrophobic properties of different sections of the target slide, the whole sample receiving surface 5 in the disclosed embodiment is provided with a hydrophobic layer 17 giving the whole surface as well as the structures (pits 9) the same hydrophobic properties. However, claim 4 specifically states that "said sample receiving surface (5) and the rim (11a-11n) of said at least one pit (9a-9n) are more hydrophobic than the substrate 3", thus referring to the hydrophobic properties of the substrate material and not referring to different regions of the sample

receiving surface 5. On the other hand, there are a wide range of techniques for creating discrete regions with different hydrophobic properties.

Applicants have amended the annotation of the figures in accordance with the Examiner's request.

The specification stands objected to as unclear, in particular, with regard to what constitutes the rim. Applicants submit that as discussed above, the term "rim" refers to the edge or corner formed between the wall 13 and the receiving surface 5. Thus, Applicants submit that it is clear as to the meaning of the term "rim". Furthermore, the hydrophilic/ hydrophobic properties of the various surfaces are also discussed above. Thus, Applicants submit that the objection to the specification should now be withdrawn.

The claims are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicants respectfully disagree.

The Examiner regards the rim does not have a clear definition. The Examiner further regards unclear how the rim is more hydrophobic than the substrate while the substrate comprised the rim. In general, the Examiner regards the language of the claims as unclear.

In response, Applicants first submit that the meaning of the term rim as used in the specification has been discussed hereinabove. Applicants also submit that as discussed in paragraph [0011] of the specification, the present invention resides in the combination of a hydrophobic sample receiving surface and a pit with a rim: "The use of a pit which has a rim diameter (or width) which is smaller than the diameter of the drop being applied to it, means that the drop is anchored by a surface effect". As is discussed in [0004], the use

of a hydrophobic sample receiving surface is desired to achieve a small sample spot, but using the prior art flat sample receiving surfaces has been associated with problems of drops moving about the sample receiving surface before evaporated and fixed. In order to achieve the desired drop retaining effect, at least the rim and the drop receiving section adjacent thereto should be hydrophobic, whereby the evaporated sample is preserved within the rim, as is disclosed by Figures 2 a) to 2e).

In an effort to expedite prosecution, claim 4 has been amended by introducing that the sample receiving surface is hydrophobic and "including at least one pit formed therein". The statement that the sample receiving surface and the rim are more hydrophobic than the surface has been deleted. Claim 8 has been amended in that it is specified that "the sample receiving surface is coated with a layer of hydrophobic material". Claim 10 has been amended in that it is specified that the "pit bottom is coated with a layer of hydrophobic material". Applicants submit that all amendments are supported by the application as filed and in the figures.

Applicants submit that the claims as amended are clear and definite, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph should be withdrawn.

Applicants assert that the claims are in allowable form and earnestly solicit the allowance of claims 4-10.

Early and favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being uploaded to the United States Patent and Trademark Office using the Electronic Filing System on January 4, 2010.

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